



To enrich lives through effective and caring service



May 19, 2008

Santos H. Kreimann
Acting Director

Kerry Silverstrom
Chief Deputy

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Santos H. Kreimann, Acting Director

SUBJECT: **AGENDA ITEM #9 FOR MAY 20, 2008**
MARINA DEL REY BOATHOUSE REFURBISHMENT PROJECT

On May 13, 2008, an item was before your Board to establish the Marina del Rey Boathouse Refurbishment Project and approve the estimated project budget of \$1,283,000. Your Board continued the item one week, because you wanted me to respond to public testimony identifying how the project money could be better spent than on a facility used solely as a "private meeting hall for County employees only". Additionally, the speakers lamented the alleged termination of the Sea Scout program resulting from the County's takeover of the facility and suggested, as one alternative for use of the project money, the money could be spent on enforcement to curtail an alleged "black market" in the Marina, whereby individuals pay cash to dockmasters to procure slips for their boats. These issues are discussed below.

CURRENT USE OF THE BOATHOUSE

Rather than the termination of the Sea Scout program at the facility, the Scouts organization remains a permittee for use of a portion of the facility's docks exclusively in connection with the Scouts' youth-oriented programs. By way of background, the Department of Beaches and Harbors ("Department") first took possession of the former Pardee Sea Scout Base (now named "The Boathouse") on September 30, 2002, at the end of a 30-year lease for the property held by the Western Los Angeles County Council, Inc. dba Boy Scouts of America ("Scouts"). At such time, a 15-month Joint Use Permit Agreement was entered into with the Scouts, which allowed for continued use of the facility by the Scouts on a joint use basis with the County. This use, however, was specifically restricted to non-profit, boating-oriented youth programs with membership open to the public.

At the end of the 15-month term of the Joint Use Permit Agreement, the Department informed the Scouts that The Boathouse was to be closed for repairs as of January 1, 2004, but that the docks could be used by the Scouts pursuant to a permit. Since that time, the Scouts have rented docks pursuant to permit, the latest of which terminates this December 31, 2008. Again, the mooring of vessels at The Boathouse docks is permitted for use by the Scouts exclusively in connection with the Scouts' youth-oriented programs.

Initial repair of The Boathouse included asbestos and lead abatement, as well as repair of a significant number of maintenance deficiencies not corrected by the Scouts during tenancy. There were also alterations to meet Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Act requirements, but only on the first floor; therefore, the facility has not been available for public use on the second or third floors. The second floor has instead been used as headquarters for the Department's Water Awareness, Training, Education and Recreation (WATER) youth program, with moderate use of the first floor conference room by Department employees or by groups displaced from the Chace Park community building due to other meeting priorities.

The Marina del Rey Boathouse Refurbishment Project before your Board consists primarily of improvements to bring the second and third floors into ADA compliance, including the installation of an elevator. Once the project is completed, other than what the Department uses for its operations, the facility will be available for public use on a regular basis. Completion of this project will also make the larger community room, which is routinely booked months in advance, more readily available for private events. The Department also anticipates using the facility in connection with the future operation of a recreational boating center in Chace Park.

ALLEGED "BLACK MARKET" FOR SECURING SLIPS IN MARINA DEL REY

The allegation about a "black market" whereby cash is paid to secure slips is not new. Indeed, it has been presented to the Small Craft Harbor Commission and subsequently written about in the local newspaper, The Argonaut. However, although specific information to substantiate the allegation has been requested on several occasions from members of the public, none has been presented. Even the video testified to at your Board's May 13 meeting has not been turned over despite repeated requests. We have contacted the District Attorney's Office about whether such evidence had been provided to their Office and/or an investigation initiated, but have not heard back. We will inform your Board if we receive information in the affirmative. The lack of evidence or any specific information about the alleged payoffs has hampered the Department's ability to fully investigate the allegations made by members of the public.

Regardless, I recently met with the new Sheriff's Captain of the Marina, Captain Oceal Victory. As an outcome, we are considering whether to establish a tip hotline to record information provided on an anonymous basis in order to address the public's concerns of retaliation for reporting this or other illicit activity. Whether or not the hotline is established, however, we have already and will continue to encourage anyone with specific information about cash payments made to secure boat slips to advise the Sheriff, District Attorney, and/or Beaches and Harbors Departments so that we may

Board of Supervisors
May 19, 2008
Page 3

launch an investigation and make efforts to crack down on this inequitable practice, which we strongly discourage.

I will be available at your May 20 Board meeting to answer any questions you might have. Alternatively, you can contact me at any time at 310.305.9522.

SHK:cec